

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5981

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 23, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to diagnostic imaging services.

**Brief Description:** Concerning diagnostic imaging services.

**Sponsors:** Senator Keiser.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/19/09, 2/23/09 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Fairley, Marr, Murray and Parlette.

**Staff:** Rhoda Donkin (786-7465)

**Background:** Advanced diagnostic imaging includes a variety of technologies used to examine internal organs, bone, and soft tissue structures in the human body. These include, for example, advanced computer tomography, or CAT scans, that combine many x-ray images with the aid of a computer to generate cross-sectional views and three dimensional images of internal body structures. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) uses a strong magnetic field, radio waves, and a powerful computer to examine soft tissue detail. Ultrasound uses sound waves to bounce off internal organ structures to create two-dimensional real time photo and video images.

According to recent data, the use of MRI and CAT scans have tripled in the last decade. The study found that the average imaging cost per patient doubled during the study period. In July 2008, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that Medicare spending on medical imaging doubled to about \$14 billion a year between 2000-2006, driven largely by high-tech imaging.

**Summary of Bill:** A work group is convened jointly by the House and Senate to analyze and identify nationally-accepted best practice guidelines or protocols applicable to advanced diagnostic imaging services. The work group will include a member of each of the following

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organizations: The Health Care Authority's health technology clinical committee, Washington State Medical Association, Washington State Radiological Society, Puget Sound Health Alliance, and Washington Health Care Forum.

The work group will identify best practice guidelines by November 15, 2009, and explore the feasibility of mandating the use of them for all payors in the state by January 1, 2011. The work group will report its finding and recommendations to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature no later than November 15, 2009.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** Yes.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This will begin a process for setting guidelines for using advanced radiological diagnostics. There is general agreement that guidelines are necessary.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Brad Boswell, Washington State Radiological Society.